

Where is God?

Text:

— Last year and a portion of the previous year the cry of many people was that God is dead. Today the hue and cry of many people is, "Where is God?" This is being asked by Christians, by atheists, by cynics, and by many others classed in many other categories. The Christians ask it in disbelief at the things which are taking place in our society and in the world around us. The atheists ask it very smugly and complacently as if to say, "I told you that your God was a fake." The others are also asking it to try and discourage the believers and get them to join the ranks of unbelievers too. It is true that this is a perplexing problem and one that has caused many people a lot of concern. This includes people on both sides of the fence.

The reasons for ~~the~~ ^{ARE} this questioning ~~is~~ simple. We look at the situation in Asia and we ask, "Where is God in Viet Nam?" We look at the people ^{...NTRIES} who are imprisoned in Russia and their satellites, and we ask, "Where is God in these cases that He permits people to be enslaved?" We look at the large scale unrest in France and we ask, "Where is God in the hearts and minds of this nation?" ^{AMERICAN} We don't need to look at France and Russia because we have problems of our own, and again we ask, Where is God in the riot torn cities, in the Southern states, in Washington with the poor peoples episode, and in the ~~hearts~~ and minds of all Americans?" Yes, Where is God? Surely you would think in all of these conditions and circumstances we would be able to see the hand of God.

He is there all right, but the trouble is we are looking for Him to intervene somehow as he did for the Israelites many years ago. God permits man to do almost anything he wants. The old saying about giving a man enough rope and he will hang himself is ^{JUST} about how we could compare mans actions and God. Man does as he pleases and God is patiently waiting for him to come to his senses. After a while ~~then~~ we either come to our senses and turn to our ^{God} Creator for help, or we become frustrated and ~~and~~ something drastic. But we can't blame God for the mess and turmoil we have in our world, in our country or in

our lives. We are each responsible for our actions. We heard in our scripture of Paul's letter to the Romans, that, "If by the Spirit you put an end to the sins of the body you will live." All through the Bible we can find verse after verse which tells us that evil will be punished, the wicked will die, God punishes the evil and so on. Therefore many people who know some of the content of the Bible begin to ask the question, "Where is God?" But to expect God to step in and stop the evil of the world just like the snap of a finger is to misinterpret God. He is working His purpose out just as surely as day follows night. But it is to His own choosing and not ours. It is to His timetable and not ours.

Nevertheless people still are all shook up and many are coming unglued to use the modern phraseology. In a few days we will once again commemorate Memorial Day. All across the land politicians and speakers will deliver messages appropriate to the day. They will tell us of our proud heritage, and how our forefathers came to this country and founded it upon religious freedom. How we are a religious people and a God fearing nation. But they won't tell us of the attempts to take the name of God or anything that smacks of religious out of the public eye. They won't tell us that ^{an} atheist wanted the prayers and Bible reading taken out of the schools for fear that her child might become contaminated with our religious feelings.

They will tell us of the advances and strides that have been made in our country and what a wonderful nation we are. But they won't tell us of the corruption and greed and moral decay that has crept into our society. ^{THE VERY ROOTS OF} They won't tell us how this corruption and decay has infiltrated our nations capitol and how our leaders only care for themselves and the power they can amass. ^{AND} They won't tell us that this decay is in our state and even local governments.

They will tell us what a glorious past has been fought and won by our soldiers and all servicemen and women. They will praise the army, Marines, Navy, and Air Force. They will speak highly of all of them. But they won't tell

us how we are wasting this manpower in a war that can have no victory because of the restrictions placed upon it. They won't tell us that this is the second such war that our boys have fought and died in. The other being the Korean joke.

Then we will hear all kinds of flowery praises for those who have died in the service of their country. Which is the proper thing to do. The memory of these people should be kept alive. But we won't hear one word for the poor forgotten men lying in hospitals all across the land who have been maimed and crippled for ~~life and forgotten~~. Theirs is a much crueler fate. At least those who died were spared this torment. But think of these people. No arms, no legs, faces shot away, blind, crippled. It's not a pleasant thought, but this is something that we shouldn't forget. Is it any wonder that people are asking, "Where is God?" The truth is covered up with words, and reality is hidden from sight. It is sort of like the little boy who came home from school with a big zero on his paper. When his mother asked what it was for, he said that the teacher ran out of stars so she gave him a moon. We cover things up with honeyed words and phrases and this makes everything all right. But does it? Isn't it a fact that this type of false security only leads to a much greater degree of frustration?

Recently I ran across the story of how the hymn America the Beautiful came into being. This hymn was inspired by a tour which the author Katherine Lee Bates made of the United States. During the summer of 1883 she traveled from the East across the country to Colorado Springs where she taught in a summer school held in that resort. She was a professor of English at Wellesley. She visited the Chicago World's Fair and was impressed with the beautiful white buildings there. She immediately named them "Alabaster Cities." The climax of the tour came when she reached the Rockies and made the trip to the top of Pike's Peak. At the sight that confronted her eyes she coined the phrase, "Purple mountain majesties above the fruited plains." She never dreamed of sharing this poem, but two years later sent it to the periodical the Congregationalist and it was published. It drew a lot of attention and was set to music by Silas G. Pratt. It has become popular not only in America but other

countries as well. In Australia the young people use it in their meetings and the name Australia is used in place of America. In Canada it is sung substituting the name O Canada and in Mexico it is Mi Mexico. This hymn made me think of what a great nation we have. But we are not told of the people who are being paid not to farm and grow things so that prices can be maintained, while we have people who could use this food and are starving because of the lack of it. It certainly is strange how humans treat other humans.

Perhaps we in this country have been blessed with too much. Sometimes it seems as though everyone feels that we can never be in need or want. ~~xx..~~

We can give our voice to the decisions made by our leaders and we can have a big voice when the elections roll around. To use the excuse that all candidates are the same is a lame excuse. We need to become informed and vote into office men who are dedicated Church people and not atheists and cynics. This is not a political sermon nor am I trying to solve the matters of our government, But I believe there are times we must speak our minds and I feel that Memorial Sunday is one of them. At least this year.

If by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live. Comforting words to those who are disheartened and concerned over the

Salem Lemartine 11:00 6/2/68
*Processional Hymn 272
*Call to Worship
*Confession of Sin
*Assurance of Pardon
Scripture St. Matthew 24: 4-8, &
37-44 2 Peter 3: 1-10
*Gloria Patri
*Apostles Creed
*Prayer ~~—~~
Anthem
Announcements
Rev. Hiack tonight 7:30, offering
Hymn sing next Sunday 7:30 ~~AM~~
128 N Main St.
17th FELL. MEETING AFTER CHURCH
INSTRUMENT 2:00 SAT.

Offering, Response, Prayer
Hymn 357
Sermon
Prayer & Lord's Prayer
*Hymn 227
*Benediction
*Threefold Amen
*Postlude

St. John Elenton 9:30 6/2/68
Processional Hymn 324
*Call to Worship Page 177
*Confession of Sin
Assurance of Pardon
Responsive Reading Sel 50 Pg 598
Hymn 167
Scripture St. Matthew 24: 4-8, 37-44
2 Peter 3: 1-10
*Gloria Patri
*Apostles Creed
*Prayer & Response
Anthem
Announcements
Rev. Hiack tonight 7:30 (offering)
Hymn sing next Sunday 7:30
128 N Main St.

Offering, Prayer
*Hymn 188
Sermon
Prayer & Lord's Prayer
Hymn 271
*Benediction
*Threefold Amen
*Postlude